



NEWS RELEASE

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WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19TH CO-DEFENDANT PLEADS GUILTY IN METH CONSPIRACY

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that an Independence, Mo., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine.

James M. Winkler, 30, of Independence, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Fernando J. Gaitan, Jr., this morning to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine between Jan. 1, 2002, and July 12, 2004.

Under federal statutes, Graves explained, **Winkler** may be subject to a maximum sentence of up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$ 2million.

Winkler is the 19th co-defendant to plead guilty in this methamphetamine conspiracy.

Alberto Balderrama-Sanchez, 33, and **Guillermo Rivera-Corral**, 58, both Mexican citizens living in Kansas City; **Samuel R. Contreras**, 25, **John B. Wolf**, 35, **Lewis G. Kilgore**, 28, **Peyton S. Leach**, 27, **Michael D. Ryan**, 31, and **Rebecca L. Alexander**, 35, all of Kansas City; **Ryan T. Poston**, 25, **Eric J. Banks**, 33, **Bradley E. Jenkins**, 20, all of Grandview; **Michael B. Pedrino**, 27, **Lucas D. Wilson**, 23, **Kelly E. Bunce**, 25, and **Leonira A. Rodriguez**, 29, all of Independence; **David J. Perez**, 34, of Kansas City, Kan; and **Gloria Garcia**, 32, of El Paso, Texas, also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute 50 grams or more of methamphetamine between Jan. 1, 2002, and July 12, 2004.

Additionally, **Esmeralda I. Mendoza-Mendoza**, 30, a Mexican citizen living in Independence, Mo., also pleaded guilty to methamphetamine related charges.

The co-defendants were originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Aug. 12, 2004, in Kansas City.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael S. Oliver. It was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Kansas City Metropolitan Drug Task Force, the Jackson County, Mo., Drug Task Force, the Independence, Mo., Police Department and the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow